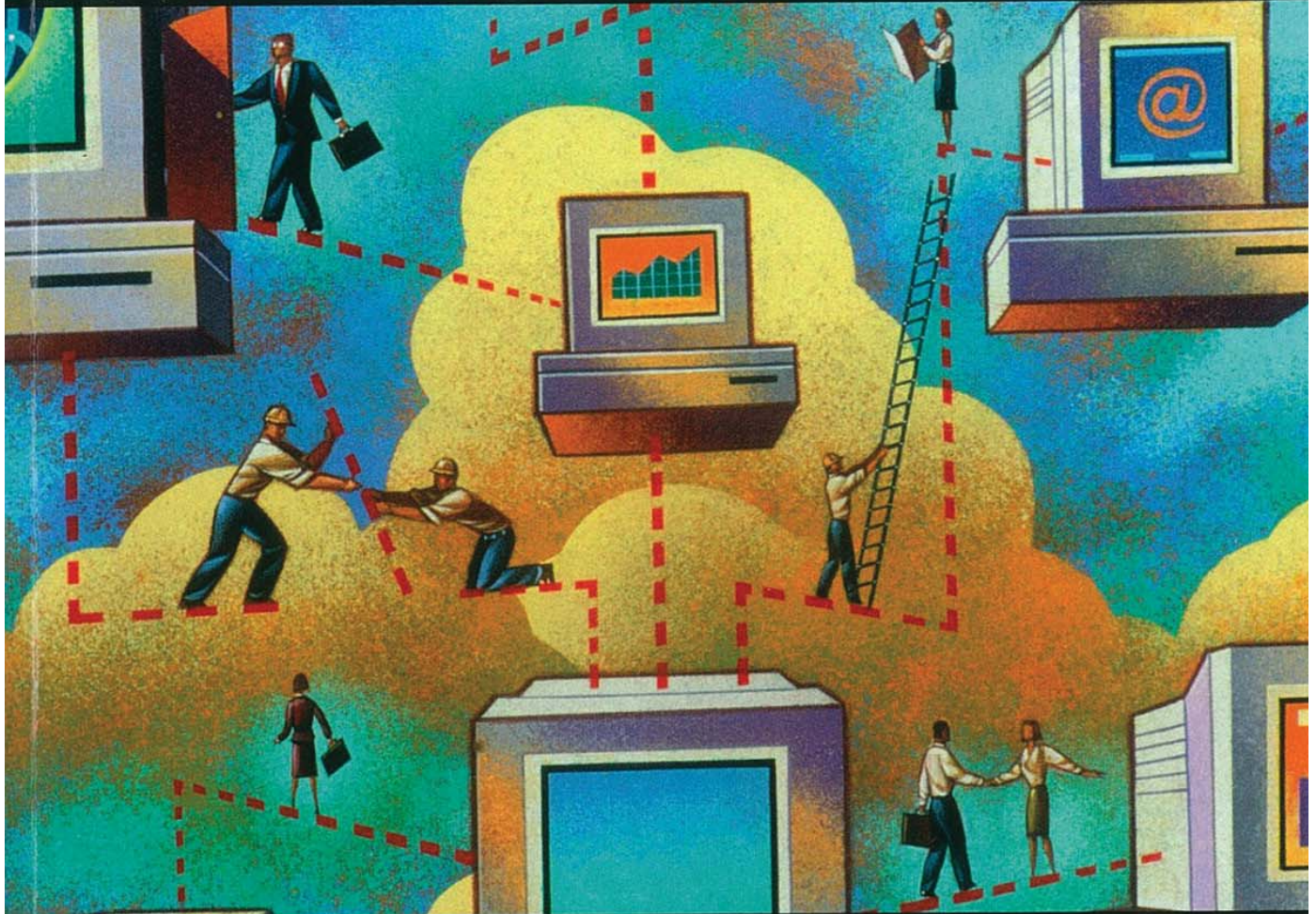


# GETTING STARTED IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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## Team-Based Tools

**Y**ou have now learned a whole set of team-based tools for managing projects such as the subproject tree, risk assessment, and the deliverables schedule. There are other, generic problem-solving tools that could be helpful to you during planning or executing your project.

These tools will help you to lead the team through the I.O.A.C.<sup>™</sup> process of making a decision about just about anything:

- ✓ I = Identify ideas or concerns
- ✓ O = Organize the ideas
- ✓ A = Analyze the ideas
- ✓ C = Choose one or more options

There are a variety of tools available for each step in the I.O.A.C. process. We'll cover four tools that every project leader should have in his or her toolbox. These tools will address more than one of the steps in the I.O.A.C. process. For example, affinity diagramming, which was already covered briefly in Chapter 4 when we developed the team contract, incorporates both the identification (I) and organization (O) of ideas.

Decision making is a process of first diverging to explore the possibilities and then converging on a solution(s). To diverge is like the open end of a funnel, gathering as many ideas as possible. Convergence consists of narrowing down the choices. It's the narrow end of the funnel (see Figure 11.1). In between is organization and analysis, processes that help you select ideas that are both implementable and best fit the problem being experienced.

The I.O.A.C. process is best used in situations where

- ✓ There are a variety of ideas about how a problem should be approached and/or solved.
- ✓ Many people have concerns about a topic. (If only two people have concerns, you can use conflict resolution. However, if several people have concerns and their concerns are all different, then the I.O.A.C. process will help.)

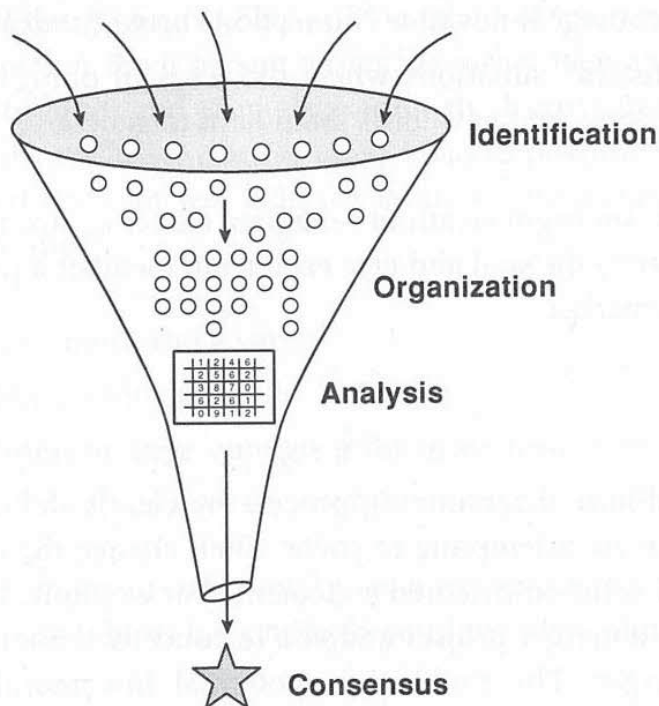


Figure 11.1 The I.O.A.C. funnel.

## TEAM-BASED TOOLS

As you recall from our discussion in Chapter 3, team-based tools are ones that employ all three sensory learning styles: visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. They help to ensure that everyone is fully engaged in the decision-making process. They also lead the group to consensus so everyone can live with the decision that is selected.

Let's examine the first decision-making tool, the affinity diagram.

### AFFINITY DIAGRAM (I, O)

The affinity diagram is a great tool for identifying and organizing ideas or issues. Use an affinity diagram when you need to

- ✓ Brainstorm with a large group.
- ✓ Organize a large number of brainstormed ideas into a format that can be used to take action on the problem.
- ✓ Encourage innovative connections between ideas.
- ✓ “Unstick” situations where old ways of doing things are not working, and new ideas seem hard to generate.

Before you begin an affinity-diagram exercise, tape a large piece of banner paper to the wall and give each team member a pad of self-stick notes and a marker.

#### ***Step 1***

Begin the affinity-diagramming process by clearly defining the problem that you are attempting to solve. Then change the problem statement into a solution-oriented statement. For example, let's say you're working on a merger project and you're concerned about morale during the merger. The problem is potential low morale during the merger. A solution-oriented statement would be, “What are all the things we can do to maintain high morale during the merger?”

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